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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9856
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 7915
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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JAN LIMA 2979
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RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 1347
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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0014
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0047
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 4024
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUCPDC/NOAA WASHDC

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TAGS: [EFIS](#) [SENV](#) [ETRD](#) [EC](#)

SUBJECT: ECUADOR DEMARCHE RESPONSE--INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

REFTEL: A) 08 STATE 127494, B) McTee-Premont e-mail 5/8/08

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Econoff met with the GOE U/S of Fisheries Guillermo Moran and newly-appointed Director of Projects and International Cooperation Ramon Montano on January 8 and delivered the demarche points from reftel a. The GOE representatives stressed their desire to achieve progress through the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). They stated they would like to work more closely with U.S. agencies like NOAA in several areas and proposed having the GOE and USG craft a joint-proposal prior to the June 2009 IATTC meeting. While they politely disagreed about who was to blame for the failure of the November 2008 IATTC meeting, the GOE officials agreed that the IATTC is an important forum and that Eastern Pacific tuna stocks require urgent conservation measures. In a separate matter, the GOE officials asked that Ecuadorian fishing vessels suspected of violating U.S. regulations not be publicly identified, since that led to harassment from NGOs. END SUMMARY

IATTC Conference

¶2. (SBU) The GOE fisheries representatives who met with Econoff on January 8 stressed their desire to cooperate more closely with the United States on a range of issues. Econoff pressed the talking points in reftel, noting USG concerns about the recent failures to achieve significant results in IATTC meetings and our view that the GOE had not played a constructive role. The GOE representatives politely disputed this assessment, saying they were fully committed to the success of this forum, and asserting that the GOE position was flexible. They argued that they had simply wanted to ensure that, if tuna conservation efforts were to be done through voluntary measures (which they blamed on Colombia's actions in the June, 2008 IATTC meeting), then member states such as Mexico must also behave responsibly. They further argued that it was only logical to resolve outstanding issues from 2008 before tackling the agenda for **¶2009**. They felt that, in fact, good progress had been made on the 2009 agenda, and that only three issues has been outstanding, none

of which were of high importance to the GOE. They blamed a lack of time and translation resources for the inability to resolve the outstanding issues by the end of the meeting.

¶4. (SBU) Econoff stated that our primary concern was that this failure not be allowed to repeat itself in the 2009 IATTC meetings. The GOE expressed agreement with this, and said that they had appointed Mr. Montano as Director of Projects and International Cooperation to work toward this goal. They proposed that the United States and Ecuador craft a joint proposal for the next IATTC meeting, which might prevent the gridlock experienced last time. They also stated a desire to sign an MOU with NOAA for closer cooperation on conservation studies and programs for bigeye tuna, sharks, tortoises, and marine birds among other issues. They presented Econoff with a copy of a letter sent on January 8, 2009 to OES DAS David Balton informing him of Mr. Montano's appointment and of their interest in an MOU. Post has sent a scanned copy of this letter to OES.

Ecuadorian Vessels Operating in U.S. Waters

¶5. (SBU) The most important issue for the GOE representatives was their previous request to maintain confidentiality regarding the identity of Ecuadorian fishing vessels accused of violating US regulations (ref b). They stated that the GOE would be very willing to assist the United States in investigating any such violations, but said that the current practice of publicly identifying these vessels was leading to harassment from groups like Greenpeace. They

noted that they had promised to provide information about four Ecuadorian fishing vessels by Feb. 15, 2009 and expressed optimism that this information would be delivered before the deadline. Econoff responded that we were aware of these concerns, but that these matters were handled by other USG agencies like NOAA and that any disclosure policy must comply with U.S. laws. Econoff informed them that the matter was being reviewed, but that we were not able to provide an answer at this time.

Comment

¶6. (SBU) Post feels that the appointment of Mr. Montano and the GOE's expressed desire to work on a joint proposal for the next IATTC meeting represents an opportunity to engage the GOE on this issue. Due to the technical nature of the issues involved, this would best be accomplished in a direct meeting between USG and GOE fishery experts before the June 2009 IATTC meeting. We would welcome comments from Washington agencies on whether this would be feasible.

Hodges